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By: Markus Nolff Date: August 15, 2002

Inventor : Lutz Richter et al.  
Applc. No. : 09/852,348  
Filed : May 9, 2001  
Title : Gathering Stapler with Separate Drives and Method of  
Operating the Gathering Stapler  
Examiner : Gloria R. Weeks - Art Unit: 3721

## R E S P O N S E

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Hon. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks,  
Washington, D. C. 20231

AUG 23 2002

TECHNOLOGY CENTER R3700

Sir:

Responsive to the Office Action dated August 7, 2002, the following remarks are made:

In deference to the restriction requirement on pages 2 and 3 of the above-identified Office Action, applicants elect **group I**, claims 1-14 for prosecution at this time.

Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application including the method claims of **group II** at a later date and/or to request a rejoinder under MPEP §821.04.

In view of the foregoing, the early issuance of an Action on the merits of claims is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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REG. NO. 37,006

For Applicants

Date: August 15, 2002

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